DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 092 189 JC 740 181

AUTHOR	Puig-Casauranc, Maria del Carmen
TITLE	Remedial Programs: Are They the Panacea or the Problem? A Report of the National Dissemination Project for Post-Secondary Education.
INSTITUTION	Washington State Board for Community Coll. Education, Seattle. Research and Planning Office.
PUB DATE	Jun 74
NOTE	21p.
EDRS PRICE	MF-$0.75 HC-$1.50 PLUS POSTAGE
DESCRIPTORS	Ancillary Services; *Community Colleges; Counseling Services; Curriculum Development; *Group Instruction; *Instructional Innovation; Paraprofessional School Personnel; Post Secondary Education; Program Development; Staff Improvement; *Student Centered Curriculum; Student Loan Programs; *Team Teaching; Technical Reports
IDENTIFIERS	*National Dissemination Project

ABSTRACT

The Mastery Education concept is a new approach to providing special help for students who need it in the community college, as well as providing new and innovative experiences for all the students. Using this concept, there would be no special classes with special teachers, but rather all students in all classes would be carried to their highest level of competence. This approach necessitates new restaffing practices, curriculum, instructional options, and supportive services. New opportunities can be afforded to all students when a community college adopts the block-type, vertical-team approach. (DB)

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF
EDUCATION
THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY.

ED 092189

REMEDIAL PROGRAMS: ARE THEY THE PANACEA OR THE PROBLEM?

By: Maria del Carmen Puig-Casauranc

Washington State University

A report of the
National Dissemination Project
for Post-Secondary Education

JC 740 181

June, 1974

Research & Planning Office
Washington State Board for
Community College Education
815 N.E. Northgate Way
Seattle, Washington 98125

FOREWORD

This report was prepared for the National Dissemination Project to suggest ways in which community colleges might better serve the needs of minority and disadvantaged students through planning.

The National Dissemination Project is an outgrowth of earlier projects funded or sponsored by the Office of Economic Opportunity to develop comprehensive educational services for the disadvantaged, and to provide institutional support in program development. One of its major missions is to provide information and assistance to planners and educators at the community college level, by responding to their requests for specific data and reports.

This report is the result of a national poll conducted by the National Dissemination Project, which identified the topics on which most respondents indicated a need for further information. The response to our poll was sufficiently large to indicate that there are certain "key" concerns felt by community college persons across the U.S. Each of our reports addresses such a national concern; and, it is hoped, provides the kinds of information that will be of help to those requesting it.

We would like to extend our special thanks to Dr. Raymond E. Schultz, and the graduate division of Washington State University, for their assistance in preparing this series of National Dissemination Reports. The work put in by Dr. Schultz's "team" on all these topics represents a distinguished contribution to knowledge on community college concerns.

The National Dissemination Project will continue until August 31, 1974 to provide information and assistance to help individuals, colleges and systems better serve the needs of students, primarily those classified as "non-traditional" and "disadvantaged."

For further information, contact:

Deb K. Das, Project Director
Research & Planning Office
Washington State Board for
Community College Education
815 N.E. Northgate Way
Seattle, Washington 98125

REMEDIAL PROGRAMS:

ARE THEY THE PANACEA OR THE PROBLEM?

BACKGROUND OF PROBLEM AND APPROACH

The community college has within its grasp the potential to influence significantly this country's sociological structure, by virtue of its commitment to provide the opportunity for post-secondary education to all adults. The factors which make the two-year institution not only inviting, but accessible, to students who in the past would not have considered college as a viable alternative to achieve social mobility are: its proximity within the community, its low tuition base, and its subscription to an open door admissions policy. However, in the past, and to a great extent presently, the community college has been hard pressed to demonstrate that it has met its obligation to the citizentry.

Perhaps the factor which has produced the most hope and has isolated the community college as a unique educational institution, is the open door admissions policy. The fact that this policy has encouraged an incredible increase in college enrollments has been well documented (Roueche, 1973), as has the fact that the type of students which have been lured to the two-year college are not only of the traditional college-bound variety. Beginning in the 1960's, a new wave of students began to frequent the two-year colleges; and it is this group of students which has posed the greatest frustrations and challenge to college administrators.

These students have been characteristically different from the average college enrollees in terms of academic preparation, cultural background, and value orientation; and, simply recruiting these students has not guaranteed them their success in their educational endeavors.

Faced with extremely high attrition rates for freshmen, many institutions were forced to examine what this commitment to an open door admissions policy inherently assumed. It became apparent that an attempt had to be made by which these new students could gradually acquire needed skills and be incorporated within the established programs. In order to accomodate these new students, special programs were developed to provide remedial assistance, initially in the areas of math and language arts. Current research is still scarce with regard to providing information of the persistence, academic achievement, and other indicies of success for the students who have had the advantage of these special help attempts; but what is available indicates that these programs are not doing the job.

The community college, being designed to satisfy the public philosophy, has been more compelled to comply with the community's sentiments and exigencies than any other segment of higher education. For this reason, there has been a lack of opportunity to develop a philosophical framework on which important decisions are based. The formulation and development of special-help attempts for the wave of new students serves as an example of this, and can be indicative of why these programs have found it difficult to

justify their existence. It is now time to review the old theoretical foundations on which these remedial programs are based, and generate a well-organized and systematic basis on which these special help efforts could be incorporated within the two-year college. It is to this end that this paper is addressed.

LABELS CHARACTERIZING THE PROGRAMS AND THE STUDENTS

It seems that the first order of business was concentrating on the formulation of terms designed to characterize both the students and the programs.

Most colleges have recognized the downfall of such terms as remedial, developmental, compensatory, and basic education and have dropped them fron their catalogues. However, the need is still felt to categorize a large number of students by referring to them as high-risk, marginal, slow learners, or academically deficient.

The continual use of such labels has several disadvantages. First, these terms are demeaning and offensive. They imply that there lies some intrinsic inadequacy within the student rather than within the educational system which he has been exposed to. Second, as a great number of these new students are of ethnic minority backgrounds, the isolation and association of these students with such labels tends to promote and perpetuate sterotypic notions about them and their inherent abilities. Third, students who have had negative experiences with the educational system will increase their resentment toward it. The result is often a decrease in motivational level.

It is not labels which are needed to alleviate the lack of success of these students, but rather, a new methodology on which to assure their educational success. An approach is needed which takes into account their weaknesses and strengths, and provides for the development of their academic, personal, and social potential.

UNDERLINING ASSUMPTIONS

While it is advanced that special help attempts specifically have been launched without a well thought out philosophical rationale, it is safe to ascertain that these programs are operating under some assumptions which must be reexamined and perhaps discarded. The first assumption centers around the idea that there are some students, as indicated by college entrance test scores and past grade point average, are not deficient, and that there is a group which is. The former group needs no special help and the latter cannot succeed without it. When deficiencies are defined in such a narrow sense--by test scores and grade point average- it obscures the fact that all students are in need of some developmental experiences and can benefit from them. It is important to remain cognizant of the fact that not even so-called high-achieving students are proficient in all areas and that a new approach to education could stimulate all students on to new dimensions of learning.

The second assumption upon which most special programs are operating is that those students who demonstrate deficiencies upon entering college must be isolated from the mainstream population. Their problems are perceived as so severe as to require separate

facilities, separate instruction, and a separate curriculum. While the literature does indicate that a new approach to instruction and curriculum is needed for the success of non-traditional students, this can be said for all students. When any group is singled out as different, there is the risk that they will be perceived as not different but inferior. It is believed that this is one reason that "remedial" programs have been construed as "second rate" by college personnel and by the students. When this kind of negative attitude saturates the environment, teachers feel slighted for having to work in them and the students are insulted and humiliated for being identified to participate in them. It is essential that a new approach to special-help programs be coordinated, in such a way that all students reap their benefits.

The third assumption lies within the instructional component of the community college. It is assumed that the students who are progressing "normally" within the traditional method of instruction are doing so by virtue of its inherent methodological value. While there are positive aspects to the lecture method and other passive attempts of transmitting cognitive understanding, this is not the only way to conduct or promote the learning process. It is essential to question what goals and outcomes are desired of education for all students, as the teaching techniques will naturally be a function of these goals.

The concept of "remedial" education for an isolated group of students as a separate instructional consideration is not desirable; nor is it productive. When it is viewed as such, education is perceived as a product, not a process; and, as a product, it is

pursued with as much competitive spirit as a high score on a football field. In education there should not be the feeling of winning or losing, but of growing and developing.

The community college has the unique opportunity to provide a truly innovative approach to education due to its size, community orientation, and flexibility. If this institution is to emphasize any special approach to education it should be to Mastery Education, not for a specific group, but for the total college population. Mastery Education implies that the two-year college would take a student where he or she may be in any area and assume the responsibility for carrying him or her to the highest level of competence. This is not done in any special classes with any special teachers, in the traditional sense; but rather, in all classes, with all subjects, by all teachers.

COMPONENTS OF THE NEW APPROACH

The adoption of the Mastery Education concept within the community college would eliminate the problems typically serving as blockages to effectiveness of traditionally based remedial programs; notably, the unfavorable image attached to instructing within these programs, the demeaning aspect of being associated with them as a student, and the formidable task of assigning hour credit toward transfer and graduation for participating students. Organization around this concept would likewise oblige administrators to reevaluate and reconsider the present goals and desired outcomes of their total program for the entire student population. Though this would seem to be an arduous venture, such need not be the

case. Whereas administrators previously proposed special attention and services for only a rigidly defined population within their colleges, they must now only restructure their thinking to concieve all students deserving of sundry services.

If the community college is to fullfill its obligation to provide higher education for the general public through the open door policy, it is essential that new approaches be implemented in terms of re-staffing practices, curriculum, instructional options, and supportive services.

RE-STAFFING CONSIDERATIONS AND HIRING PRACTICES

The goal of the two-year college under a Mastery Education concept is to take each student at his entry level of academic and social attainment and facilitate his moving on at his own pace to the highest level he can achieve while attending the institution. For this to be achieved, the selection of instructors must be done with the student as the focal point. No longer is it appropriate for instructors to be hired by traditional standards, considering only the possession of academic credentials. While it is essential that the instructors have a certain level of professional competence, this alone is not enough. Community college teachers can no longer be of the variety that hunger and long for a position at a four year college and are accepting a position at the community college level only until such an opportunity arrives. In order to change the tone and flavor of the community college, the staff must be committed to the special task involved in teaching in the community college. The instructors

must be student-oriented, willing to and capable of working with them on an academic level, and relating to them on a personal level. This kind of expertise requires an awareness of the special kinds of needs of the students and where they are coming from. Candidates should not be considered unless they can demonstrate that their academic preparation lends itself to dealing with the diversities of the student population that they encounter in a community college. The instructor must not consider his job solely in terms of facilitating learning, but also facilitating a closer linkage between the college and the community. In terms of classroom technique it is necessary that the two-year college teacher keep abreast of innovative teaching approaches which have been found useful, and be both capable and willing of incorporating these approaches in their classes.

INSTRUCTIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

The research indicates that the two-year institutions which have provided the opportunity for students to become actively involved in their learning process succeed academically to a greater extent than those students which have been subjected to the traditional modes of learning (Ed 068 098). Students at all academic levels can profit from the kind of instruction which serves not only to disperse knowledge, by one that generates motivation to learn. Extending the instructional arena to the community and its resources is one way of adding a dimension of vitality to the learning experience which affects students positively. There are many opportunities for instructors to ulitize these resources whether the class is mathematics,

history, geology, or home economics. There are lay persons whithin the community who can frequent the classroom and provide additional expertise and knowledge. They should be encouraged to contribute. An aspect of traditional teaching which is counter-productive, is: limiting the interaction among students. Community colleges which have initiated group tutorials, peer teaching, and other group activities are succeeding well, not only by extending the essential academic constructs, but also by enhancing motivational levels of students.

Another aspect of innovative instructional techniques which have been long in coming are individualized module packages, self-pacing devices, and electronic teaching machines. Though these have been thought of only for "special" students there is no reason to believe that most students would not benefit from their use. They concentrate upon developing the student's proficiency in a certain area and gradually progress him to the level which is acceptable to himself and his instructor. They provide maximum opportunities for the student to develop self-conficence and a new self image of himself as a learner, an aspect of learning which the traditional method of instruction largely neglects.

THE CURRICULUM

The curriculum traditionally developed for community college students has been centered around basic subject matter and has sadly disregarded the affective domain. Reports about successful remedial programs around the country have built into their programs a process by which students can develop an awareness and understanding

of their psychological, cultural, and behavioral make-up. Classes and seminars have been offered which utilize such counseling techniques as sensitivity training, communication skills, group counseling, and encounter methods. Community college personnel are truly committed to the personal growth of students will recognize the value of this type of exposure for all students.

Another important consideration that should be reflected whithin the curriculum is the pluralistic philosophy upon which this country is based. The community college has the largest enrollment of minority students of all the institutions of higher education. They bring with them a richness of culture and diversity of value orientation which should be respected, understood, and encouraged. There should be some focus in the curriculum on the cultural differences of ethnic minorities and how they have contributed to this country. Presenting material of minorities by a historical, social, and philosophical approach develops awareness and sensitivity in non-minority students while building pride and positive self-esteem in ethnic students. Salazar (1974) wrote,

> "Minority studies are interested not only in the acquisition of knowledge but also in what ways their students, both ethnic and Anglo-American, can use what they learn to solve problems and cope with a changing world... When instructors help their students acquire information, facts, insights, attitudes, and feelings concerning different ethnic cultures, they are facilitating and making the pluralistic philosophy this country aspires toward more of an actuality that it presently is."

The curriculum should be designed around the humanizing model of education developed by O'Banion (1971) wherein the student himself becomes the center of the curriculum. Topics for study during the community college experience are based on the individual, his relationship to society, and contemporary issues. Within this model, the teacher acts more in a facilitative role than in an instructional role. Consequently, it is important that the faculty reflect the kind of flexibility which is needed to do this. Again, elements of the "college without walls" enter in here, as students need the opportunity to venture out into the community and obtain "outside" educational experiences which could not be generated within the classroom. Also these elements that take the student as the focal emphasis within the community college are essential for the institution to be able to say it is discharging its responsibilities to them.

A final area of concentration, which the literature indicates is important to increase the chances for success for all students, comes under the heading of supportive services. Specifically, counseling and guidance, financial aids, and the use of para-professionals.

COUNSELING AND GUIDANCE SERVICES

Traditionally, counseling and guidance have been separated from the instructional components within the community college. That, no doubt, accounts for the fact that such services have not reached full potential for helping students. Nor have they earned a place of respectability or credibility with the instructional staff.

Community colleges which have incorporated the counseling staff within instructional units have found that not only do counselors reach students better, but instructors as well. With counselors' backgrounds in learning and motivational theory, they should ideally be working in a greater capacity than just setting up schedules and shuffling paper in an office remote from students. Many schools are now having counselors teach classes in personality adjustment, and conduct sessions on communication skills and sensitivity training. Using such persons in this way generates greater cohesiveness between students and instructors, and enables the student to profit from his educational experience in a new way.

FINANCIAL AIDS

The ultimate display of commitment which the administrative staff can demonstrate is in terms of assuring that students who are in need of financial aid do not have to depend solely upon unpredictable government funds for support. While it is recognized in these times of the "educational crunch" that monies are difficult to find, administrators must join with legislative bodies to locate funds which can be earmarked from the college budget for the purposes of financial aid. If it is argued that this is an unreasonable request, here again the priorities of the college are reflected. If an increase in expenditures in some areas, such as athletics, is accepted without question and no money is allocated for financial aids, it is obvious that the college still has not assumed the responsibility of providing for and putting in the forefront the needs of all students. By means of writing proposals,

decreasing or eliminating tuition and book costs, and providing on site employment or employment within the community for students, the college can facilitate a healthy financial posture for those students that are in need of this help.

PARA-PROFESSIONALS

Various colleges are using the assistance of para-professionals. Their expertise falls within a wide range of areas and their services can be utilized in many ways. Many are young persons who relate well with students and can instill motivation as well as provide social moral support for all students. For this reason they serve well in the capacity of tutorial partners and special assistants in such areas as learning and resource centers. Some colleges also utilize them in classrooms to assist individual teachers as well as in team teaching.

Results on the use of para-professionals are mixed. In some situations they have met with success; but frequently their efforts have produced negative reactions. These feelings stem from the fact that again the para-professionals reinforce the image that the students with whom they work are somehow deficient. Students, feeling as if they are in some way abnormal, may resent the special attempt to help them. It separates them from the mainstream population, and they experience negative feelings from their peer group.

Evidence to date suggests that para-professionals can be useful, but they should be utilized in such a manner that students are given the opportunity to go to the para-professional and receive help when they feel that they need it. Open writing laboratories, reading

centers, and resource areas where the audio equipment is stored are places where para-professionals can provide individualized or group assistance to students, and the students are not singled out in a way that generates feelings of resentment.

CONCLUDING REMARKS AND SUGGESTED ORGANIZATIONAL PLAN

The emphasis of this paper has been on formulating a new approach to providing special help for students who need it within the community college, but also on providing a new and innovative experience for all students.

Once an institution isolates a certain class or group of students because of differences in an attempt to up-grade their status, the results of their efforts will only be minimally effective. They will not serve significantly to alleviate the perceived problems; instead they will help manifest new problems for these students, such as reduced self-esteem and motivation. Isolating these students will also serve to perpetuate stereotypes about their backgrounds and characteristics--to no good end. The focus of the community college must be on providing new opportunities for all students.

New opportunities can be afforded to all students when a community college adopts the block-type, vertical-team approach to coordinate students and staff. This approach was developed by a highly successful community college in Texas but was used strictly for its Basic Studies Program. It is felt that a higher degree of success across the board could be stimulated with the implementation of these concepts within the general community college, as there are many advantages for students as well as teachers.

Block-type refers to the method by which students are organized into study components taking all classes together. Course selections and course times are assigned for large groups of students, with sections of students being assigned to a specific group of staff members. Students in the same section attend classes as a unit.

Vertical-team refers to the organization of the staff. Under this concept the staff is not asscciated with any academic department, but each team includes instructors who have different areas of specialization. They work together for various projects with students, and can also work separately. Each team holds as many teachers as is necessary to assure maximum personal contact with students and would vary with the size of the community college. If the students are blocked into groups of 100 students, it would be advisable to have at least five teachers. Included in the team is at least one counselor.

There are several advantages to the incorporation of these concepts in the two-year institution.

First, flexible scheduling permits a greater allocation of time to innovative teaching activities, on and off campus.

Second, grouping students together for long periods of time promotes strong peer relationships.

Third, teachers and counselors can work together to develop a program with a wider base, as well as have the opportunity to work out any problems together.

Fourth, there is more variety possible within the curriculum when a team of teachers work together with the same students.

While the average age of community college students has risen in the last few years, there are still large numbers of students who are fresh out of high school. These students could benefit from the kind of experiences afforded through a block-type, vertical-team approach, especially during their first year of college. It would lend itself well to helping all students attain the highest degree of success both academically and personally; and after all, that's what community college is supposed to be all about.

REFERENCES

1. Anderson, Clarence. "Problems of Individualization." (ERIC ED 047-914), February 1970.

2. Beal, Jack. "An Analysis of Remedial Mathematics Programs in Junior and Community Colleges." (ERIC ED 043-335), October 1970.

3. Beal, Rubye M. "Open Admissions in the Community Junior College." (ERIC ED 055-296), November 1973.

4. Brossman, Sidney W. "Access to Higher Education Through the Community College." (ERIC ED 082-747), November 1973.

5. Ferrin, Richard I. "Developmental Programs in Midwestern Community Colleges." (ERIC ED 048-848), February 1971.

6. Hunter, Charles F. "Closing the Gap: An Approach to Solving Reading Problems at San Jose City College." (ERIC ED 049-985), April 1971.

7. Jennings, Jerry T. "Undergraduate Enrollment in Two-Year and Four-Year Colleges." Series p-20, Number 236, (ERIC ED 067-971), June 1972.

8. Knoell, Dorothy M. "The 'New Student' in the Community Colleges." (ERIC ED 061-930), 1972.

9. Loak, John. "Do Remedial Programs Really Work?" (ERIC ED 046-975), February, 1971.

10. Morrison, James L., Ferrante, Reynolds. "Why the Disadvantaged Drop-Out: The Administrator's View." (ERIC ED 071-665), 1973.

11. Pyle, Gordon B. "Action Steps for Reaching the Disadvantaged in Colorado." (ERIC ED 049-895), March 1970.

12. Roueche, John E., Kirk, R. Wade. "An Evaluation of Innovative Programs Designed to Increase Persistence and Academic Performance of High Risk Students In Community Colleges. Final Report." (ERIC ED 067-094), September 1972.

13. Roueche, John E., Kirk, R. Wade. "Catching Up: Remedial Education." Joseey-Bass Publishers, San Francisco, 1973.

14. Salazar, David. "Minority Studies and the Diversified Students Served." Unpublished seminar paper, Washington State University, 1974.

15. Schafer, Michael I, and others. "Implementing the Open Door: Compensatory Education in Florida's Community Colleges." Phase I: Questionaire Analysis. (ERIC ED 046-370), December 1970.

16. Sharon, Amiel T. "Effectiveness of Remediation in Junior College." (ERIC ED 051-795), September 1970.

17. Snyder, Fred A., Blocker, Clude E. "Persistence of Developmental Students." (ERIC ED 042-438), 1970.

18. Spencer, Gary D. "A Reading Program for Open Enrollment." (ERIC ED 048-998), December 1970.

19. Springer, J. "The High-Risk Student, the Community College and the Church as Advocate.: (ERIC ED 066-152), May 1972.

20. Stegenson, Jane L. "Implementing the Open Door: Compensatory Education in Florida's Community Colleges." Phase II-English Composition. (ERIC ED 042-456) 1970.

21. Vaughan, George B., Puyear, Donald E. "After the Open Door: An Approach to Developmental Education." (ERIC ED 059-714), 1971.

22. Weigel, Mark. "A Comparison of Persisters and Non-Persisters in a Junior College." (ERIC ED 044-115), 1969.

23. Wenrich, J. William and others. "Keeping Drop-Outs In: Retention of Students Identified as High Probability Drop-Outs." (ERIC ED 047-684), 1971.

UNIVERSITY OF CALIF.
LOS ANGELES

JUL 5 1974

CLEARINGHOUSE FOR
JUNIOR COLLEGE
INFORMATION